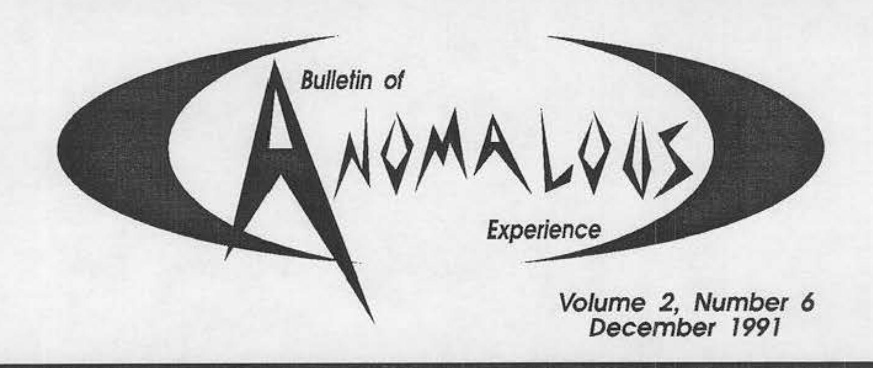


Volume 2, Number 6
December 1991



Editorial

This may be the last issue of BAE -- depending on your response.

Reason: The original intent of BAE was to serve as a medium for creating a dialog and exchange of information among therapists and scientists interested in the abduction phenomenon. That dialog has failed to materialize. Although I have received many kind words from readers (and I appreciate every one!), with some notable exceptions not much material/opinion/research/questions hve been submitted.

I have a number of ideas why this is so. Chief among them: The high ratio of passive:active readers is an inherent characteristic of projects like this. (On computer bulletin board systems, on which BAE was originally based, 'passive' users, who read messages but post none of their own, are said to be 'lurking'). So, BAE would need a larger readership than the present 90-ish to support the kind of dialog I was hoping for.

It may also be that IUR, MUFON Journal, JUFOS and Journal of Scientific Exploration together fill whatever niche I thought could be uniquely served by BAE.

Whatever the reason, BAE has evolved into a collection of book reviews, literature searches and current abstracts. This information is available in other forms, though many of you have said that you enjoy what I have presented.

Rather than a death knell, I would prefer you see this as a request for opinions and ideas about the future of BAE. If you think the basic idea is sound and would like to see it continue, in one form or another, please write. Perhaps the focus needs to be changed, or the frequency of publication decreased to only two or three times a year.

I plan to suspend publication with this issue (which completes the 1991 series and so fulfills my subscription obligations). I may, however, put out a small issue in early 1992 depending on the response to this issue and my request for ideas about the future of BAE.

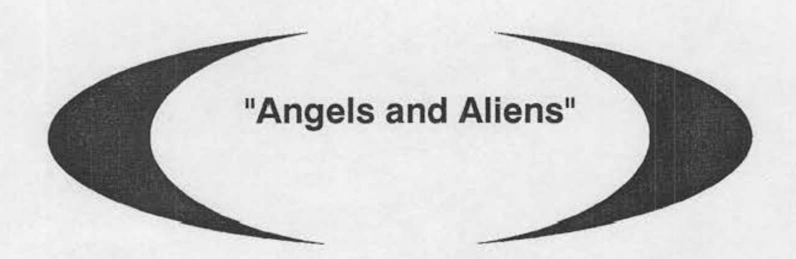
And to all who read this, thank you for being there.



Finally -- a Question!

John Robert Colombo (whose book UFOs OVER CANADA is discussed elsewhere in this issue), sends out the following request for information. You can write him at 42 Dell Park Avenue, Toronto M6B 2T6 Canada. (If you do have an answer for him, you might want to send a copy to me, since I have some interest in this area too).

Do any readers have any information on the French Islamic scholar Henri (or sometimes Henry) Corbin? He is credited with coining the term "imaginal" to refer to the domain that lies between the real and the imaginary. References to him crop up here and there, but they never seem to lead anywhere! The concept seems to shed light on the nature of anomalous experience.



"Angels and Aliens"

ANGELS AND ALIENS looks at the history of UFOlogy from the perspective of an emerging mythology. I have heard much reflection of late on the mythic and archetypal dimensions of the abduction phenomenon (see later in this issue for a discussion of the Trickster archetype in psi studies). I have wanted to touch on this aspect for a while, and Keith Thompson presents a very readable and scholarly overview of this subject in his new book. I present below excerpts chiefly dealing with the abductee phenomenon.

The dustjacket describes Keith Thompson as "an independent scholar and journalist with particular interest in the cultural imagination. A consulting editor of the quarterly journal ReVISION, he did the original New Age magazine interview with Robert Bly that first brought the 'men's movement' to wide attention. He makes his home on the central California coast."

Angels and Aliens: UFOs and the Mythic Imagination

Keith Thompson
New York: Addison-Wesley, 1991

Clearly there are differences between the reports of contactees and abductees, yet in these very differences reside significant symmetries as well. Both classes of experience open onto larger archetypal universes. Just as contactee encounters are rich with prophetic undertones and images of ascent to worlds in space, abductee encounters feature striking echoes of mythological journeys to the world below, the underworld, the realm of the dead and the dispossessed, the infernal regions of the collective soul.

...The experience of the underworld is typically described in mythologies throughout the world as gloomy, confined, dark, doleful, and humid. Abductees speak of being confined in quarters usually termed dank, oppressive, humid, and dimly lit. Many report that a spaceship of relatively small dimensions seemed curiously spacious inside, with dark mazelike corridors apparently leading to the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel, reminiscent of Alice's adventures in Wonderland. The landed saucer becomes a scene of traditional underworld torments, a prison of suffering inflicted by primeval demons....

...The idea that all contactee reports are based on religious experiences rather than real events, while abductions are real events having no religious dimensions, continues to be popular among ufologists, even though available evidence favors a middle hypothesis. For instance, many self-styled contactees who describe being taken against their will ("abducted") report that they do not identify with the "ufologically correct" victim status promoted by some abduction researchers. Such witnesses report finding their encounter experience transformative, along the lines of a cosmic rite of passage.

And, rather than being free of "religious" implications, abductions are frequently described in terms of terror before the awe-inspiring mystery (mysterium tremendum) of a presence that stands as "wholly other" (ganz andere). Such imagery touches the very core of religious experience as expressed in cultures throughout the world. Many abduction accounts, with their emphasis on confrontation with numinous or godlike beings emanating supernormal presence, read like passages from The Dark Night of the Soul by the great mystic Saint John of the Cross.

Without doubt, there are significant surface differences between UFO encounters, angelic visitations, shamanic journeys, and near-death experiences. Yet in all of these realms we find archetypal images of initiation involving otherworldly journeys amid extraordinary -- AND APPARENTLY AUTONOMOUS -- beings. Many ufologists, seeking to keep their precious field of study unique and discrete, question such parallels because, they say, there is no evidence that the beings described in non-UFO reports are "from the same place" as UFO beings. What they seldom point out is that there is no evidence, either, of where "UFO beings" are from!

...Over time, many [abductees] come to see that on the other side of the frustrations of life in the margins lies a perception available to those willing to enter it: that not being able to classify oneself is also a freedom from having to cling to a single identity. Willingly embracing the marginal, liminal, twilight realms of being, the domain of uncertainty and not-knowing, can make possible new insights, new ways of "constructing reality." In this sense, the UFO encounter experience prods us to take apart easy ideas about the supposedly interminable gulf between mind and matter, spirit and body, masculine and feminine, nature and culture, and other familiar dichotomies.

...This is a place where fuzzy edges present not simply a challenge to reimpose lost order (the characteristic response of mainstream ufology, ever in search of the

Single Correct Pattern), but an opportunity to play in the vast polymorphous perversity of the Creative Matrix. This is the space where Trickster resides, part Mother Teresa (the saintly angelic aliens of Adamski), part Darth Vader (the demonic Men in Black), part Pee-wee Herman (the absurd messages given Ed Walters and other witnesses by their alien-angel communicants...).

...Many UFO witnesses emerge from their sighting experience or close encounter with a surrealistic appreciation that the world is filled with enormous vistas and abysses. It is as if they have glimpsed the edge of reality so precisely defined by the surrealists, and now can never go back to the mechanistic Newtonian world absent of depth, beauty, significance, and soul. In contrast, both extremes of the UFO debate -- proponents and debunkers -- seem committed to forcing witness interpretations into narrow boxes that witnesses themselves tend to see as inadequate. This is surely one of the richer ironies of the unfolding UFO epic.



John Colombo, known as Canada's "Master Gatherer" for his many and varied compilations of Canadiana, has produced a delightful collection of first-person accounts of close encounters. Reading it reminded me yet again of the powerful effect sightings and abductions have on the experiencers. (The book is also close to my heart because some of my clients discuss their experiences in it). The excerpts below are mainly from the introduction and conclusion, and gives you some idea of John's approach to the subject matter.

Purchase UFOs Over Canada for $14.95 (Canadian dollars) through Hounslow Press (124 Parkview Ave., Willowdale, Ont. M2N 3Y5 Canada), or Arcturus Book Service PO Box 831383, Stone Mountain, Georgia, 30083-0023 USA

UFOs over Canada
John Robert Colombo
Hounslow Press, 1991

UFOs over Canada is a collection of "personal accounts" of sightings of Unidentified Flying Objects. This collection may not be the first book about UFOs in Canada, but it is the first Canadian book to offer the reader so many first-person descriptions of sightings.

The sixty accounts in this collection are all eye-witness accounts; here there are no second-hand reports or third-hand descriptions. In their own words, in a narrative fashion, witnesses express what they sensed, what they felt, and what they thought. Some of the witnesses go further, as they recollect their memories and impressions of "close encounters" with alien craft and even the experience of being abducted by alien beings.

...For a new focus on the phenomenon, shift attention from what is seen in the sky to the account of what is seen. Each one is idiosyncratic yet each is a member of a class of such accounts. The members of the class have some characteristics in common. One important characteristic is the fact that they all make remarkable reading and telling. This may seem incidental or obvious, yet the narrative nature of the accounts is what keeps them in oral and written circulation. It accounts for much of their appeal. Each is a great story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Such stories begin by begging the question; they end by begging the answer. These narratives are not to be confused with contemporary folklore; they are quite distinct from urban legends...

In folklore studies, a true story or tale recalled and recounted by the person to whom it occurred is called a memorate. Folklists use that term for all episodes, whether ordinary or extraordinary. For the purposes of this collection, the term is used to refer to extraordinary episodes. Here is a working definition of a memorate:

A memorate may be defined as a truthful account of an anomalous event or experience, oral in origin, narrative in form, expressed in the first person, related to sympathetic people by the person to whom the episode occurred, made especially significant and meaningful through the inclusion of elements that are both ordinary and outlandish, and concluding with an expression of the realization that the episode is contrary to common sense and to science.

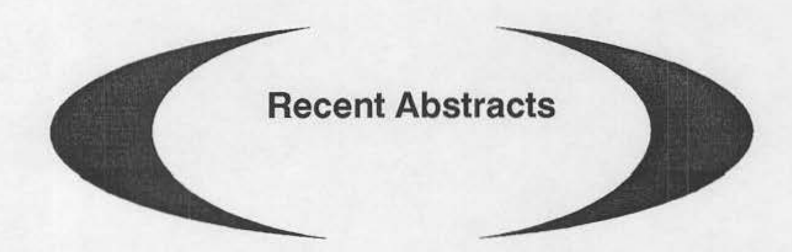
The fact that a term from folklore studies is used to refer to the narrative features of the experience need not imply that the experience is nothing more than folklore or moonshine, false to fact though true to human experience; it could be true to fact....

Memorates are about as close as the majority of us will ever come to the UFO experience. Although we may never see a UFO, we are able to study these memorates with objectivity, with sympathy, and with a sense of wonder.

...The student of these matters is not required to be a skeptic or a psychic; he or she is required to take into account the great range of events and experiences, episodes and encounters, uncovered by history and discovered by the literature on the subject. If there is a single lesson to be learned, or moral to be acknowledged, it is that the UFO phenomenon requires that we be aware of "the other," whether within ourselves or without ourselves.

A message or mandate with this meaning may well have been what the Eastern poet Rabindranath Tagore had in mind when he wrote so movingly about communication and contact in one of his wonderful mystical poems:

"This eager wonder is at the heart of things."



Recent Abstracts

Hypnotic Susceptibility and Subjective Psychic Experiences: A Study of Participants in A.R.E. Conferences.

Richards, Douglas G.
Journal of Parapsychology, Vol. 54, March 1990, pp. 35-51.

A number of studies have shown a correlation between hypnotic susceptibility and self-reports of psychic experiences. The data, however, do not give strong support for concluding that hypnotic susceptibility or its correlate, "fantasy proneness," provide an explanation for psychic experiences. To test this relationship further, the present study, based on a population reporting a very high level of psychic experiences, correlated hypnotic susceptibility as measured by the Harvard Group Scale of Hypnotic Susceptibility with psychic experiences as reported on two well-documented scales. The correlations with psychic experiences were low and marginally significant and of approximately the same magnitude as those in previous studies. The mean score on the Harvard scale was similar to the norms for the scale, suggesting that the population was not unusual in terms of hypnotic susceptibility. Although hypnotic susceptibility may help explain a small portion of the variance in reports of subjective psychic experiences, a number of factors, including actual psi and temporal lobe symptoms, may well play a larger role. Studies of people with large numbers of psychic experiences who have low hypnotic susceptibility may aid in the understanding these other factors.

Subjective pseudocyesis (false pregnancy) and elevated temporal lobe signs: an implication.

Persinger MA
Percept Mot Skills (1991 Apr) 72(2):499-503

Twenty-two percent of 106 undergraduate university women reported symptoms of pseudocyesis: cessation of menstruation, abdominal enlargement, morning sickness, and breast changes. These women also displayed significant elevations in temporal lobe signs with particular involvement of putative right hemispheric processes. Women prone to pseudocyesis displayed more memory blanks, nocturnal akinesia, awareness of abdominal sensations, and exotic beliefs such as alien intelligence; the phenomenon was 10 times more frequent in Roman Catholic women than in Protestant women.

Time distortion--a comparison of hypnotic induction and progressive relaxation procedures: a brief communication.

von Kirchenheim C Persinger MA
Int J Clin Exp Hypn 1991 Apr;39(2):63-6

Hypnotic experiences are frequently associated with alteration in temporal perception. 24 male and 24 female Ss were asked to estimate the interval associated with hypnotic, relaxation, or control procedures. Only the group that received the hypnotic condition displayed significant distortions in time estimations. These were primarily underestimations (temporal constriction or "time loss") compared to the more normal distributions of estimations for the other 2 groups of Ss. The hypnotic treatment explained about 35% of the variance in the absolute distortion of time estimates. The present study demonstrates that subjective distortions of time experience during a hypnotic procedure are more than an artifact of deep relaxation or instruction.

Increased geomagnetic activity and the occurrence of bereavement hallucinations: evidence for

melatonin-mediated microseizuring in the temporal lobe?

MA Persinger
Neurosci Lett 1988 Jun 7;88(3):271-4

This study was designed to test the hypothesis that common bereavement apparitions are hallucinatory experiences evoked by transient electrical instability within the (glucocorticoid) sensitized mesiobasal temporal lobes. All first hand reports of 'postmortem apparition' experiences were collected from a published data base. The days on which the experiences occurred displayed significantly greater (mean increase = 10 gamma) geomagnetic activity compared to the days before or afterwards. These results suggest that bereavement apparitions are situation-specific hallucinations evoked by microseizures within sensitized temporal lobe structures; the occurrence of these microseizures might be facilitated by suppression in melatonin levels that could accompany sudden increases in geomagnetic activity.

Temporal lobe signs and enhanced pleasantness scores for word generated during spontaneous narratives.

Ruttan LA Persinger MA
Percept Mot Skills 1989 Dec;69(3 Pt 2):1101-2

Temporal lobe function has been strongly implicated in the processes of semantic selection. Within this context, enhanced activity of deep mesiobasal structures is expected to influence the affective dimensions of language use. Quantitative measures of the evaluative (pleasantness) dimension but not the activity (arousal) dimension of words generated during narratives of subjective experiences within an exotic setting were significantly correlated with the numbers of temporal lobe signs.

Temporal lobe signs and Jungian dimensions of personality.

Huot B Makarec K Persinger MA
Percept Mot Skills 1989 Dec;69(3 Pt 1):841-2

Phenomenological experiences that suggest temporal lobe lability were correlated with Jungian personality (Myers-Briggs) indicators. People with frequent temporal lobe indicators were more intuitive than sensing and more perceiving than judging; in the more general population temporal lobe indicators were also weakly associated with feeling rather than thinking. Students who were actively engaged in a drama class also displayed more frequent temporal lobe signs than psychology students. The data are commensurate with the hypothesis that the relationship between belief in psi phenomena, psi experiences, and specific cognitive styles is derived from a temporal lobe lability factor.



The "Trickster" Archetype

Dr. Lutz Müller is an analytical psychologist in private practice in Stuttgart. He is the author of Para, Psi und Pseudo (Berlin: Ullstein, 1980). This paper originally appeared in a slightly longer version as "Psi und der Archetyp der Trickster" in Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie und Grenzgebiete der Psychologie 23,3/4 (1981): 165-181. The extracts below are from the translation, which was published in Artifex 9 (Summer 1991): 31-41.

Psi and the Archetype of the Trickster

Lutz Müller, Dipl. Psych.,
translated by Wolfgang Taraba, Ph.D.

Extract #1: The Trickster Archetype

We encounter the Trickster in the most diverse forms and manifestations: divinely demonic beings, superhuman as well as brutish, endowed with magic powers in mythologies, fairy tales, sagas, and fantasies, in the god Hermes in Greek mythology, the figure of Loki from Germanic lore, the African god Eshu, and Christianity's Devil, with many of his magical and enchanted personifications. Human figures such as crafty fools, wily rogues, conjurers, illusionists, rope dances, jugglers, clowns, freaks, and "flipped-out" and "crazy" people [personify the archetype].

In everyday life we are confronted by it in the form of the tricks that inanimate things play on us, the strange coincidences, embarrassing errors, and sudden, perhaps lucky, unforeseeable turns of events. Wherever you encounter trickster phenomena, they cause surprise, dismay, amazement, irritation, angst, joy, or shock. Something is going on that is fishy, that is "not right." You no longer know what is going on; you lose your composure and your "footing": the existing system of consciousness is jeopardized and distorted. [N.b. the term 'verrückt' ("crazy"), literally means "moved out of focus," which explains the author's hyphenated spelling 'ver-rückt,' "distorted"].

This is the reason why Karl Kerényi identifies Trickster as the spirit of disarray, the enemy of boundaries and

limiting systems. As a violator of boundaries, he appears whenever we find borderline conditions, dissolution, and change. His realm is in the dubious and ambiguous, the nebulous, the uncertain, and his main characteristic lies in his contrary, polar nature. By means of this paradoxicality, he transgresses and breaks through any established, unambiguous, and thus one-sided system of human consciousness and norms or of societal organization. This makes it impossible to pin him down, classify, or pigeonhole him. [Kerényi notes:] "And when you believe you have caught him, he'll jump out of the box." (This is a reference to his jack-in-the-box-like character, which cannot be held captive.) He is dazzling, changeable, and undefinable, constantly making appearances in different places and shapes.

In terms of depth psychology, he is characterized by his proximity to the unconscious, to a unified reality, the inner wholeness of a human being (the Self). He can thus heal the split in the human psyche by uniting the Ego and the Self, combining the masculine with the feminine, good with evil, life with death, sense with nonsense, and truth with deception. He is experienced either as positive or as negative, depending on the nature of the individual ego consciousness. Trickster behavior may manifest itself on the most varied levels of consciousness: in its most differentiated form as a consciousness that is able to realize the paradoxical nature of being and self (as formulated in Taoism [as the self-as-it-is] or in the figure of the wise fool, such as Castaneda's Don Juan). In its undifferentiated form it is a consciousness that has barely arisen from an unconscious state and in which, therefore, all conceivable opposites in the human psyche are found in constant conflict and change.

Extract #2: Psi and the Trickster archetype

The interested reader will be aware by now that paranormal phenomena are trickster phenomena par excellence. ...I will present a summary of the most essential and conspicuous connections of psi with the Trickster archetype.

1. The appearance of paranormal phenomena is trickster-like. They crop up spontaneously and unforeseeably in places we do not suspect. ...

2. The phenomenology of psi phenomena is trickster-like. I refer less to the diversity and the fascinating, mysterious iridescence of psi phenomena than to our inability to evaluate them. On the one hand, inquiries show that spontaneous psi experiences are frequently linked with affective-negative occurences and thus can be of great personal importance; on the other hand, many cases are known in which these experiences are connected with everyday happenings....

The Trickster archetype blends sense with nonsense: spiritism is the best case in point. Messages conveyed by mediums may contain deep wisdom but also intolerable, insipid rubbish. In this ambivalence of valuation, parapsychologists may sometimes feel like pioneers about to achieve a breakthrough to a revolutionary new knowledge of the world, and at other times like fools.

3. The history of parapsychological research is a history of the fight against deceit and fraud. Keeping in mind the trickster-like ways in which psi phenomena manifest themselves, we clearly recognize that they often provoke deceit and fraud. There are no studies or findings in the history of parapsychology that have not aroused suspicion -- a suspicion, it turns out, that is all too often justified. These inextricable interlacings of genuine and fraudulent, parapsychology and deception, are the most impressive proof that paranormal phenomena are controlled by the Trickster....

4. Psi mediums are trickster-like personalities...Even "genuine" mediums -- those who at least occasionally produce convincing phenomena--appear to be trickster personalities. ...

As I have pointed out, the trickster archetype always manifests itself in situations denoting boundaries, transitions, thresholds...[One important transition in human development] is located at the point where the ego gains autonomy within a system of cultural norms: this is simply the transition from child to adult. ...

When and why does the trickster syndrome evolve during [this] critical transition? ...[W]e may assert that trickster-like attitudes are strengthened when the adolescent does not succeed -- for whatever reasons -- in adjusting to standard behaviors characteristic of his age group. He then becomes an outsider, an eccentric, and may try to gain the acceptance of his social group by following a crooked path. Such a case is the class clown. ...If such a young person does not integrate with adults through compensatory (e.g. artistic) abilities, his trickster-like behavior may become habitual. We are then in the presence of one who plays the rogue. ...

The rogue...according to older linguistic usage is no criminal, but [is] also not an honorable being; he occupies the middle ground betweeen the wag and the villain. He does not desire evil, nor is he recklessly given over to evil instincts; he only reacts to the malice of his environment in the same malicious vein; he is not dedicated to... getting though life with his morals intact, but he does want to survive--and survive well....he survives through craftiness..his strength lies in his knowledge of human weaknesses that he detects, unmasks and exploits even among those holding secure positions and high rank...he accomplishes this without having a master plan, he does it from case to case, yielding to necessity and being seduced by temptation. The rogue has no goal in life: he only wants to rise to a higher living standard, he only wants to enjoy his life in comfort and free of ambition. He has no program and does not want to improve the world. His aims are near: he does not design his life but allows himself to drift; he feels uncomfortable wherever he encounters constancy and orderli-

ness. He never clings to objects and hardly ever to a human being; he is no adventurer but his life proceeds adventurously. ...

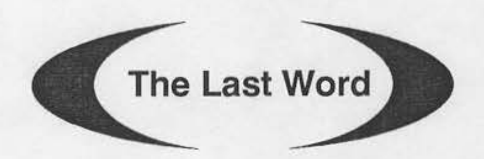
(P. Radin, "Der gottliche Schelm, with commentaries by K. Kerenyi and C.G. Jung (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1978), passim. English translation: Radin, The Trickster: A Study in American Indian Myth, with the commentaries (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), passim.)

...At times these people appear to be living personifications of the unconscious, pure and simple, so that in their paradoxicality and internal contradictoriness their left hand does not know what the right is doing.

Extract #3: Conclusions

I have proceeded from the hypothesis that the manifestations of paranormal phenomena are controlled by the Trickster archetype. If taken seriously, this hypothesis would present a series of quite uncomfortable consequences: We would be forced to give up hope that some day there would appear the parapsychological experiment, the technical method, the psi medium who could prove the existence of psi phenomena in consonance with modern scientific thought -- for all that is questionable, shady, deceitful are part of the phenomena themselves and inextricably bound to them. If one were to attempt an elimination of the trickster-like qualities, one would also eliminate psi. If one were to discover an experimental structure that satisfied all scientific requirement, and if it became impossible for the Trickster archetype to constellate -- whether in the arrangement of experiments, the experimenter, in the medium to be tested or in the resulting statistics -- then nothing psi-like could occur. We would have to recognize that what -- in a strictly scientific view of the world -- is considered a weakness of parapsychology is anchored in the very nature of psi phenomena; that it is due to neither the investigator's incompetence, nor the medium's deliberate acts of fraud.

One would have to admit and take seriously the fact that our occidental scientific view of the world has a different understanding of archetypal reality than the reality from which paranormal phenomena emanate. We would have to recognize that our difficulties are not due to the phenomena themselves being "perverse" or out of order, but rather that it is the structure of our consciousness that is "perverse" and unqualified to grasp this other archetypal reality. Future investigators would no longer be trained along the lines of scientific, experimental, statistical thinking; instead, their schooling would have to stress trickster psychology in the sense of Tart's "state-of consciousness-oriented science," whatever that involves. They would also risk being considered crazy by scholars of the established sciences; and they would have to endure the frustration of the absence of anything certain that could be conveyed to researchers in the established scientific community. After a long life, an investigator would in all probability be left with the timid hope that C.G. Jung entertained toward the end of his life. In regard to the problem of paranormal phenomena in the context of life's meaning, he stated: "As with all metaphysical questions, it is probably true that life is both sense and nonsense, or that it makes sense and makes no sense. I harbor the uneasy hope that sense will predominate and win the battle."



A closing thought from CRY OF THE EAGLE, by David Young, about anthropologists who lived with a Cree shaman, and were profoundly changed by the experience.

We cannot say that we have given up our Western heritage and 'gone native,' but all three of us have been changed by encounter with Russell Willier (Cree shaman). We frequently see or suspect a pattern where none existed before. How far can we move in this direction and still be scientists? The answer must vary with each individual. We would argue that good science involves setting up creative opposition between two or more systems so that experiences and concepts can be explored from a variety of angles. This is intended not as a reiteration of the idea that all things are relative, but as a claim that anything of importance has multiple dimensions and that a single world-view is limited in its ability to perceive and deal with more than a few of these dimensions. One does not have to give up one world-view in order to enter into another. We have learned that it is valuable to let world-views interact and to allow ourselves to be stimulated and enriched by the experiences that result from that interaction.

Remember, the future of this project depends on you.
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